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# Women's Concerns

Report

## Palestinian Women

Compiling a *Women Concerns Report* about Palestinian women has been challenging, interesting and frustrating. As I thought about the kinds of people I would ask to write and about the issues facing Palestinian women today, I realized the task was immense. Only a small portion of the complex reality could be presented.

First one has to ask, "Which Palestinian women?" The ones living in the Israeli-occupied territories of West Bank and Gaza strip? The ones living inside Israel? The ones living in the Diaspora—either in Arab countries or elsewhere in the world? I chose to concentrate on the Palestinian women living in the Occupied Territories.

Palestinian women living under Israeli military occupation are struggling for liberation on two fronts. First, they are struggling on a national front to help liberate their people from Israeli military rule and to establish a Palestinian State. And they are also working on a social front to liberate themselves from oppressive structures within their own society—from the restrictions of a classist and male-dominated society.

Since the turn of the century Palestinian women have been involved in the national struggle, fighting to keep their land and national identity as more and more Zionists came to settle in Palestine. The establishment of the State of Israel and the 1948 war created a major crisis for the Palestinians.

What was a victory and cause for rejoicing for one people, the Jews, was a catastrophic loss and the beginning of massive suffering for the Palestinians. Many were left homeless and landless. The Palestinians who remained in the State of Israel found themselves a second-class minority within the Jewish State. Those who found themselves in the West Bank lived under Jordanian rule from the time the West Bank was annexed to Jordan in 1950 until the war of 1967.

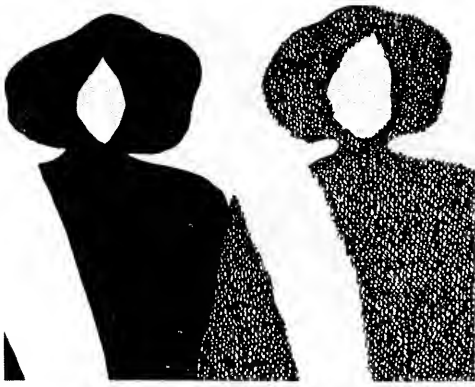
The war of 1967 and Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip created another generation of refugees and brought the remaining population in Palestine under Israeli military rule. Land and water confiscation, home and town arrests, administrative detentions, Israeli settlements, house demolitions and other forms of collective punishments became everyday features of Palestinians' lives, as has Palestinian resistance.

Women have become an important part of the resistance movement, both as individuals and through their various organizations, and have been accepted as equals alongside the men.



**Adla Issa, writer of "Miriam Barakat" and an MCC employee, chats with Kathy Bergen, compiler of this issue.**

Palestinian women's other struggle has been to fight traditional roles that a hierarchical, male-dominated society has imposed on them. Women have traditionally not worked outside the home. Men have traditionally made the decisions and been the heads of societal institutions. Yet with so many men in prison or exile, women are left with the major responsibility of providing for themselves and their families—in addition to fulfilling their traditional roles. They are still not accepted as equals in society, however.



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The tremendous gap between the urban elites and the refugee camp women has intensified the class struggle. Illiteracy, poverty, lack of job opportunities, of educational facilities, of day cares and kindergartens all contribute to the pressure that women face as they struggle for a more just society.

The three articles and six portraits that follow attempt to give a glimpse into the nature of the issues that women face:

—"The Women's Movement on the West Bank: An Overview" by Mona Rishmawi shows how the women's movement has progressed over the years and how various laws have affected women on the West Bank.

—"Women Political Prisoners Emerge Stronger," written by two women political prisoners, demonstrates how the prison experience has strengthened their resolve.

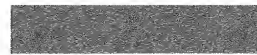
—"Cooperatives Enhance Women's Status" by Sahir S. Dajani delineates the process a group of village women went through in their transition from wage-earners to running their own business.

The six portraits provide a cross section of Palestinian women: Miriam, who has faced a series of tragic events in her life; Zaynub who, because of her husband's murder, is raising four children by herself; Um Khalil, who is working to help women help themselves; Amal, who through her commitment to the liberation of women instills a vision in many women; Jean, who through her ideals, beliefs and work as a Christian, is seeking to bring about justice for all.

Many more stories could be told and many more issues could be written about. These are the ones I present here.

—Kathy Bergen

**Kathy Bergen is a General Conference woman from Coaldale, Alberta who has been working with MCC on the West Bank since April 1983.**



by Mona Rishmawi

## The West Bank Women's Movement: An Overview

The Palestinian women's movement can be traced to the beginning of this century. Palestinian women came out in the front ranks during the British Mandate period, when Palestinians mobilized to establish their Arab identity and even more so under the current Israeli occupation, when Palestinians mobilized to establish their Palestinian identity.

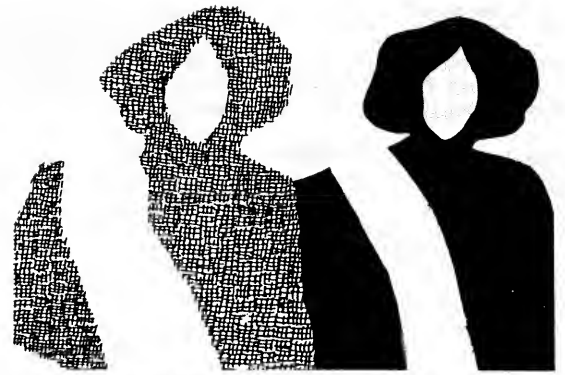
A basic difference exists between the two periods, however. In Mandate times, the Palestinian women's movement played a supporting role to the national struggle, and did not include specific women's rights among its stated goals. Today, by contrast, there is a strong, popular women's movement.

During the 30 years of British rule (1918-1948), the British modified and replaced various Ottoman laws, but paid no real attention to the laws of personal status, particularly those affecting women.

The events of the Mandate period—whether the presence of the Mandate Government itself or the increased Jewish immigration to Palestine and the spread of Zionism—put Palestinians on their guard and made them fearful for their country's future. Palestinian women thus felt obliged to come out into the front lines and to shrug off many traditional restrictions. Female voices were raised, urging women to participate in the national task.

Another trend which later influenced Palestinian women was the education boom in the Arab world towards the end of the last century. Soon after the British took power, they imposed a system of compulsory education, although it was not effectively enforced. They also encouraged missionary schools, which practically invaded Palestine. In her book *Abir and Majd*, Esma Tubi writes that the people allowed their children to attend these schools, while rejecting the new Western thought that accompanied them.

**"Since the beginning of the occupation, Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories have aimed at the Judaization of the land, the obliteration of the Palestinian identity and the prevention of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state."**



Women's work in this period was distinguished by a common denominator—the political struggle—despite the fact that the movement did include the controversial goals of social liberation and the removal of the veil. On October 26, 1929 the first Women's Conference was held in Jerusalem and was attended by about 3,000 women from the Palestinian towns of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, Nablus, Ramallah, Jenin and others. The conference aimed to organize women's work for the recovery of the homeland and the aid of needy families.

Many of the charitable societies that began work at this time were influenced by missionary philosophy and proceeded on the basis of good works and charity. Certain others of them, however, were motivated at least in part by their stand on political and social liberation.

Such an organization was the Arab Ladies Society in Jerusalem, established in 1921. This society purchased land for martyrs' families and founded workshops for their employment. Rather than charity, the society adopted the motto, "Earn your bread by the sweat of your brow." It also collected second-hand books and magazines to be sent to prisoners, and called for the boycott of foreign goods and the purchase of local products. The society had a notable effect on nationalist work at this period, perhaps because of its proximity to the course of events in Jerusalem.

Women's work at this time however was mostly confined to the middle classes, and the movement's vanguard was made up of the wives or relatives of male political activists. Its social base was thus narrow and confined.

In the Palestinian countryside, women held a special position in village life because of their major economic role. This situation lasted until the Disaster of 1948 and the dispersion and diaspora of the Palestinian people (the United Nation's partition of Palestine and the ensuing Arab-Israeli War). Palestine was divided into three parts: the West Bank, which fell under Jordanian rule; the Gaza Strip placed under Egyptian administration; and the remainder of Palestine, in which the "State of Israel" was declared.

This uprooting had a profound effect on Palestinian society, transforming the majority of Palestinians in the area declared Israel into refugees. Leaving behind their lands and vocations, the peasant class fled and huddled in camps. Through the loss of their land, which had been their basic source of income, and because of the realities of the camp life, they had to relinquish many of their old ways of life.

At this point I will focus my attention only on the West

Bank, which had been placed under Jordanian rule after the 1948 partitioning of Palestine.

On June 5, 1967, the June War broke out. When it ended, Israel occupied the remainder of Palestine—the West Bank and Gaza Strip, along with the Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai Desert.

Military Proclamation No. 2, issued on June 7, 1967 by the Israeli Army Command in the West Bank, transferred all the legislative, executive and administrative powers previously held by the Jordanian government to the General Military Commander for the West Bank region. All the laws in force at the time of occupation were to remain unchanged, unless modified by other provisions from the Israeli Military Commander.

International law has two standards that may permit an occupying authority to change existing local laws—either that a change is necessary for the occupying power's security, or that it is in the interest of the local inhabitants. Since the 1967 occupation, however, the Israeli authorities have modified many of the existing Jordanian laws so as to suit their own goals, mainly, the Judaization of the Occupied Territories and the prevention of the establishment of a Palestinian state. To date, the Israeli authorities have issued a staggering 1,180 or so military orders.

International law requires that Israeli legislation modify local laws which pertain to vital civil affairs in order to accommodate social development and thus protect the well-being of the occupied. Most of the military orders issued by the Israeli military authorities, however, do not deal with such laws.

The legal texts relating to the status of women have thus remained as they were in the Jordanian period, with two exceptions.

In the first case, the Israeli military authorities did not intervene when in 1967 the Islamic courts applied the law of Personal Status for Muslims, issued that year in Jordan.

Perhaps the most important point in the new law is that it gives the wife the right to demand compensation for "arbitrary" divorce, and enables her to seek a maximum compensation equivalent to one year's maintenance. This is extremely significant, as it goes against classical Islamic law which holds *talag* (divorce) to be the unilateral right of the husband, who may enforce it whenever he wishes, without having to show reason or justification.

• **For Further Reading**

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The second exception is something that the Israelis usually point to as proof of their concern for Palestinian women's legal status. Military Order 627 of 1976 gives women voting and candidacy rights in municipal posts—abrogating Jordanian law that confined such rights to males.

I would suggest, however, that the Israelis' main motive in giving women the vote was not, as they claim, concern on their part to improve women's legal status, since they have changed no other provision whatsoever relating to women's legal status. Rather, the move was made for purely political reasons related to Israeli policy interests in the West Bank.

The Israeli authorities have also placed many restrictions on societies and unions by refusing to register them, and by restricting their work with the use of provisions from Jordanian law. Despite these restrictions, a wide, strong and popular women's movement exists today. The movement holds that social liberation must come side by side with political liberation, and exerts every possible effort to those two goals.

Since the beginning of the occupation, Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories have aimed at the Judaization of the land, the obliteration of the Palestinian identity and the prevention of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. These policies have obliged the West Bank women's charitable societies to change the direction they pursued under the Jordanian regime.

Before 1967, their activities were mostly limited to charity and good works. Now movement activities focus on steadfastness in the land, the preservation of Palestinian cultural heritage, and the support of the inhabitants of the occupied land in the burdens of daily life. Perhaps the best example is the role of the *In'as al-Usra* society of al-Bireh. (See profile of Samiha Khalil-ed.)

In 1976 a number of young Palestinian women with liberatory aspiration met in an attempt to examine and evaluate the position of women's work in the West Bank. They found it to be all but confined to charitable societies, with mainly middle-class membership. They also found that these societies held a traditional view of women, in that they tried to help women cope with life's burdens in a role supportive to the man. The training they offered was also limited to traditional types of work long recognized as "suitable" for women, such as secretarial work and dressmaking.

Due to these women's belief in the necessity of a strong women's movement linking social and national liberation, and comprised of women of all classes, they formed a new women's organization. Work was begun in the form of committees rather than charitable societies due to the many restrictions placed on registration of the latter.

In the West Bank there are presently four different committees for women's work based around the villages and camps. Village women participate in the work, decisions and general steering policy.

The various projects have so far proceeded on the basis of helping women to get out of the home, broadening their perceptions of women's rights and freedom, and helping them to overcome their daily problems in order to free them for productive work. Child care centers and kindergartens have been opened in many places and clinics have been established to address health problems. Literacy classes have also been set up in the villages on the belief that illiteracy is a basic obstacle to the participation of women in productive work.

The committees have also started various projects to help women qualify themselves for non-traditional fields. They have prepared studies on women's status, and issued publications describing their ideas and strategies and urging working women to join unions. They have campaigned for equal pay for women, and for legal rights like maternity leave. They have also succeeded in having International Women's Day recognized as a paid holiday in a considerable number of West Bank institutions.

The various women's committees debate as to whether priority should be given first to political liberation and then to social liberation, or whether the two causes should proceed together. Some place political liberation before social liberation, but the majority see the situation in reverse.

The women's committees coordinate their activities with other Palestinian institutions, making women's work an active and influential factor in Palestinian society, and one that greatly contributes towards influencing the course of events in the West Bank. ■

**Mona Rishmawi is a practicing lawyer living in Ramallah. She also works with Al Hag, a human rights documentation center located in Ramallah and affiliated with the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva.**

They will beat their swords into  
plowshares and their spears  
into pruninghooks.  
Nation will not take up sword  
against nation, nor will they  
train for war anymore.  
Every man will sit under his own  
vine and under his own fig tree,  
and no one will make them  
afraid, for the Lord Almighty  
has spoken.  
—Micah 4:4

"We cannot separate the  
struggle in prison from the  
national struggle outside."

by Orayab Najjar

## Zaynub

We sit with Zaynub (not her real name) in the house of her elderly parents where she and her four children live. She holds her 7-month-old son on her lap. Next to her parents' house sits a huge heap of rubble—the remains of her house and her personal belongings.

Last summer Zaynub's husband disappeared. The Israeli authorities were searching for him because of his political activities. While he was missing, Zaynub was repeatedly called to the Israeli military governor's office in Hebron. She would go to the office and, after waiting the whole day, would be told to come back another day.

This went on until one day, a Muslim holiday, she decided not to go. She had been afraid not to go before because her failure to appear could have any number of consequences, but with the encouragement and support of her family and others in the village she decided not to go. In this case nothing happened to her.

In early October Zaynub's husband was killed by Israeli soldiers as he was trying to escape into Jordan. The day after he was killed Zaynub gave birth to the baby, whom she called Tha'ar, which means "revolutionary." Another



Palestinian child was born—to grow up under Israeli military rule, to be told of his father's life and his people's situation, to continue the Palestinian struggle.

On October 6, the Israeli army bulldozed Zaynub's home and the homes of three other political prisoners in Surif as a collective punishment. Her home is lost; all she possesses is what she could salvage in the short time before the bulldozer began to work. She has four young children to raise. Her family is providing as much support as they can. ■

Orayab Najjar is on the faculty of Bir Zeit University, West Bank.

by Nura Maklouf and Haifa Abu Halib

## Women Political Prisoners Emerge Stronger

Prisoners represent our people's struggle for national self-determination and the creation of a Palestinian state. We cannot separate the struggle in prison from the national struggle outside.

The confiscation of land, the deportation of Palestinians, the demolition of houses, the collective punishment of towns and camps and the continuous harassment which the Zionist authorities are practicing in the Occupied Territories have pushed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians—including women—to join the national struggle.

Since 1967, hundreds of Palestinian women have been involved in many operations and have been imprisoned for life or for long periods. Immediately after the 1967 war, many Palestinian women were captured, savagely tortured and given life sentences to deter others and to smash the national movement. Prisons were built and hundreds of men and women were put behind bars and walls. Suffering and pain was found in every Palestinian home—in every family one or more members were killed or imprisoned.

The first Palestinian women prisoners, despite the torture and ideas about women's passivity, didn't give up—they



**"...we struggled to be treated as political prisoners and as human beings; and we struggled against society's negative ideas."**

didn't surrender. They repeated some verses which gave them strength: "That's how it goes my friends, the problem is not falling captive, it's how to avoid surrender."

Palestinian women from the beginning struggled to be considered prisoners of war according to the Fourth Geneva Convention in order to improve their daily life in prison. The struggle was not easy. In every incident the racist ideology won out in the tug of war. We faced jailers full of hatred; we were deprived of the basic things of life; we struggled to have books and a library; we struggled to be treated as political prisoners and as human beings; and we struggled against society's negative ideas.

At the beginning people didn't believe that women could be in prisons. We struggled to reveal what had happened during the investigation and interrogation, disclosing the brutal, savage and systematic torture. By our continuous struggle we succeeded in achieving many accomplishments such as obtaining a library, beds, sheets and not having to sew our jailers' clothes. We turned the prison into a school, graduating hundreds of strong women. As we said from the beginning, we cannot separate the national struggle from struggle in prison; in the period while accomplishments were achieved by the Palestine Liberation Organization, prisoners were also struggling and confronting the authorities.

When we were kept behind bars for long periods we became stronger, thus destroying the Zionist myth and the Zionist plans to change the revolutionary women into tools ready to obey their rules and laws. Instead of this, Palestinian women, especially in recent years, have escalated their struggle and refused all the rules which the prison administration has wanted to impose on us. They wanted to force us to cook for our jailers. Our reaction was to begin a strike which lasted for nine months. For nine months we were deprived of books and newspapers and of listening to the news. Visits from our parents were limited to one visit every two months, which would be completely cut at any moment if anything about politics was said. We were allowed to see the sun one hour every day, separately and not as a group.

Wanting to quell our spirit, prison administration used brainwashing. But in the face of these harsh measures, we became more and more creative. We started to write short stories, poems and verses. We also held discussion groups on various subjects.

The strike continued. After about five months, when the administration found that all their measures proved useless,



they attempted to suffocate us inside our cells by throwing a large quantity of tear gas inside. This tactic was also useless compared to our will to succeed and to gain our just demands of refusing to cook for our jailers. After nine months of struggle in Neve Terza Prison—with collective solidarity from the national Palestinians, the committee of lawyers and the democratic and progressive women's movement in Israel as well as the world democratic progressive movement—the administration was obliged to fulfill our demand. That occurred on March 8, International Women's Day.

Later the authorities tried to take away all or some of our victories in Neve Terza, but by then the Palestinian women were ready to struggle against their divide-and-rule strategies. We began a hunger strike which lasted for eight days.

These examples give the real picture of Palestinian women behind bars. They show women's profound awareness that one step in their social liberation is to join the national struggle.■

**Nura Maklouf and Haifa Abu Halib are pseudonyms for two former women political prisoners from the West Bank. The two were released in a prisoners exchange between Israel and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. This article first appeared in *Al Fajr*, March 7, 1986.**



## Miriam Barakat

We sit in Miriam's two-room house, which she shares with her youngest son and her daughters, as she tells us her story.

In 1948 Miriam was 8 years old and living in Deir Yassin, a village on the outskirts of what is now West Jerusalem. It was just prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. A group of Jewish soldiers entered the village and began slaughtering everyone—men, women and children. According to International Committee of the Red Cross figures, 254 people were massacred.

Miriam's stepmother knew that if she did not help her children escape they would all be killed. She lowered Miriam from the window of their house and told her and her two brothers to run to their aunt's house. But her aunt was also lowering her children from her window. Miriam joined people from her village who began to run to another village. They ended up in the village of Ein Kerem, where she and others took refuge in a convent. She slept there for two nights but could not stay because the people in Ein Kerem also fled in fear of massacre. Large trucks took her and the others to Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem's Old City and from there to Silwan, a village on the east side of the Old City.

Miriam's aunt took her in. "Come. I'll take care of you. We have God," she said. Later, Miriam's stepmother joined them in Silwan.

Shortly after the war Hind al-Husseini established the Dar al-Tifl school in Jerusalem especially for children who were survivors of Deir Yassin. Miriam spent two years there and enjoyed it very much. But her aunt came to bring her back to Silwan where she was needed to help care for the rest of the family.

At age 25 Miriam married her cousin, who was four years older than she, and moved to Jerusalem. When the 1967 war broke out, she had two sons and was pregnant with her third child. Again she had to flee, this time to Hizma, a village north of Jerusalem. She returned when the war was over to live in Jerusalem, this time not under Jordanian rule but Israeli military occupation.

Life became more difficult. Her husband eventually lost his job and Miriam sought employment. She found it at the Mennonite Central Committee offices where she worked from 1971 until 1982. In 1973 Miriam's husband emigrated to the United States in search of work. He married there and never returned, leaving her to raise their five children on her own.

Miriam's life has been largely determined by events over which she has not had control. She has struggled hard to survive emotionally, physically and spiritually.■

**Adla Issa is an MCC employee on the West Bank.**



by Kathy Bergen

## Amal Wahdan

Amal Wahdan is a member of the executive of the Palestinian Union of Women's Work Committees. She and her husband, son and daughter live in el-Bireh, 25 kilometers north of Jerusalem. Both she and her husband are under six-month town arrest orders, which means they cannot leave the city boundaries. Her husband must report to the police station every day and Amal once a week, to "confirm their existence," as the order states it. Their children accompany them on these trips.

This is Amal's third town arrest. In 1983, during her first town arrest, a women's group raised her case and the order was shortened to two months. She was pregnant and her husband was in prison, which she believes may have influenced the decision.

In August 1986 Amal was to begin a new job working for Al-Haq, a human rights organization associated with the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. The day before she was to begin work she received a six-month town arrest order. Since the job required travel, Amal lost it because of the order.

Being under town arrest has also affected Amal's relationship with her extended family. Since Amal and her husband are under arrest in el-Bireh and her sister-in-law and brother-in-law and their families are under town arrest in Abu Dis, near Jerusalem, the family can never be together, not even on holidays, which are very important. Their children can visit their grandparents only when

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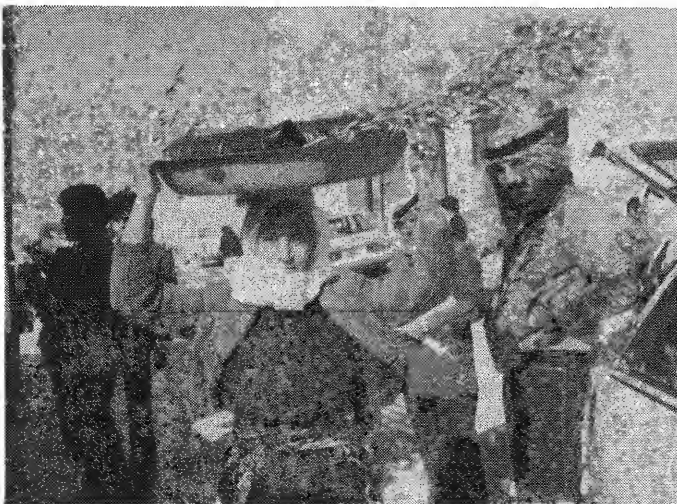
someone else takes them. Even though Amal's mother is very supportive, it is extremely difficult for her, as it is for everyone involved—morally, physically and spiritually.

Despite this, Amal exudes strength, determination and hope with a contagious spirit. Her strength comes from her ideas and beliefs, her determination from seeing the situation around her unfold, and her hope from the accomplishments. She sees women around her becoming more conscious of the situation and more determined to change it.

Because Amal is confined to el-Bireh she has concentrated her efforts there, giving lectures on health and other issues. She believes that the first step is for women to become aware of their situation and of why they are in it. Their awareness then generates the power to change it and their empowerment generates the awareness and empowerment of others. An empowered woman can do anything, Amal believes.

She also believes that women's empowerment cannot happen at the expense of the national struggle—or vice versa. The liberation of women and the liberation of Palestine are inseparable, she believes. She also believes it is important for Palestinian women to make contact with women in other developing countries.

Amal embodies her beliefs. As an empowered woman struggling to improve the situation of Palestinian women, she creates a spark which empowers all who come into contact with her.■



by Sahir S. Dajani

## Cooperatives Enhance Women's Status

*"I will never forget the first day when I took the 6 a.m. bus to Jerusalem to do errands for the cooperative. The other passengers, all male laborers, stared at me strangely. I was shy and could not raise my face, imagining what was going through their minds. The 40-minute trip felt more like two hours. I was worried about facing the same experience on the return journey. I gathered my strength and accomplished the purpose of my trip. On my way back I faced the same challenge. But I have since made other trips, as have other women members, and we have been able to influence the men's perception of our role, especially as the community has become aware of the newly established cooperative."*

—Zend, a cooperative member

*"Before becoming a member of the cooperative I accepted the role of a simple housewife at home, raising my children and accepting my husband's dictates in managing the family. A year after I started working in the cooperative, my husband noted a change in my thinking. He remarked favorably on my sharing decisions concerning running our home. I now speak my mind about existing and future prospects for my family—something I did not do before being a cooperative member. I feel I am a different person when I am able to talk about issues concerning the cooperative with my husband, such as its finances, production, management and profit-sharing."*

—Suad, the cooperative president

Making the change from wage earners to self-employed members of a cooperative is not easy. The story of the Surif Women's Cooperative goes back to 1979, when MCC proposed transferring responsibility for the Needlework Program to the village women. Surif was chosen for the pilot project since the largest number of women working in the program live there.

When the pilot project was suggested, the Surif women showed very little self-confidence. I thought they would not be able to learn.





**"Social change is a slow process. The cooperative members definitely have more decision-making roles in their home and community than they did before, however."**

We held an orientation to introduce the women to the idea of handling more responsibility at various stages of production, which up until then had been handled by the Jerusalem center. We took the women on field visits to two villages already involved in self-reliant projects. The visits were successful. Afterwards, the women became eager to become more involved in the production scheme. In 1980 we rented a two-room house in Surif where the women gathered during the week to do their embroidery. We held a series of meetings for the workers, who gradually and reluctantly accepted the ideas of participation and leadership in the program. Their reluctance, it seemed to me, was partly a fear of the unknown and of taking responsibility. But it was also due to women's social context, which discourages them from displaying initiative.

We began an intensive training period in August 1981, with courses in accounting, management and production planning. Although the tasks were mastered in six months, the training period lasted one year and was used to work out a suitable administrative structure. The women learned methods of collective decision-making. Their collective responsibility and confidence slowly grew. Initially there were problems with egotism, both in individuals and in the group itself, but with experience members realized that cooperation was essential to effective decision-making. The women's backgrounds varied: some had completed high school while others were illiterate. Sometimes tension and conflict among the workers hampered progress. We realized that it would take time to achieve genuine participation.

I was available every Wednesday to meet with members. We discussed many issues regarding cooperative laws and regulations and cooperative ideology. We also talked about general issues: the meaning of education; socioeconomic realities; common family problems such as food, clothing, and housing; the occupation; and feminist concerns, particularly the women's new role in running an organization independently of men.

During 1982 we discussed the cooperative's bylaws and established that the cooperative would elect its own manager. We obtained approval for the cooperative's registration in August 1982. Currently the cooperative has 127 shareholder members and over 250 affiliated members in other villages. The administrative structure includes an elected president, a five-member administrative committee and a three-member supervisory committee.

By the end of 1982 the Needlework Program had been completely transferred to the Surif Cooperative. The

Mennonite Central Committee donated some assets, in addition to machines, materials and thread.

The new independence was a somewhat frightening but also promising reality to the over 400 members. There was competition over the position of manager: the presence of different clans with conflicting interests in the village contributed to the difficulty. Members with strong personalities but who were illiterate also sought the position. The power struggle lasted for almost a year before it was resolved and a manager finally appointed.

In its first years the cooperative has made profits. The worker-owner have agreed to buy land to construct a center to replace the present rented quarters.

MCC's role is at present advisory, in addition to being responsible for marketing the cooperative's production. This is expected to continue and to be supplemented by other activities to enhance the cooperative's viability and women's groups' economic development.

Social change is a slow process. The cooperative members definitely have more decision-making roles in their home and community than they did before, however. Their power is not only the result of their economic independence but also of the mutual support members give one another.

I believe the women's cooperative experience is very relevant to the development process, provided that the cooperative's operations are truly democratic and that members truly make decisions themselves. I believe that such experiences enhance women's status and the well-being of their children, and contribute to the creation of a more just society.■



**Sahir Dajani is the Women's Development Officer, MCC West Bank.**



by Kathy Bergen

## Sameeha Khalil

Sameeha Khalil (Um Khalil) was born in Tulkarem in the West Bank; her husband was from Asqalon. In 1948 they became refugees and went to Gaza, where Um Khalil's husband worked for the Egyptian Department of Education. They decided to return to Tulkarem, however. After having blamed UNRWA and the Arab world for what was happening to the Palestinians, Um Khalil decided that something had to be done. She decided to do it.

In 1965, six women founded the *In'ash el-Usra* (Family Rehabilitation) Society. Um Khalil is its president. "The society was born from the deep difficulties of the Palestinian people," she says.

In the early years the society had a sewing and embroidery center where illiterate young women were also taught to write and read. The 1967 war disrupted things, but soon members of the society were driven by their people's terrible condition to not only continue their work, but also to provide food and shelters for those rendered homeless by the war. Instead of continuing emergency relief, however, the society decided to go in a radically new direction— income generation and job training.

Today *In'ash el-Usra* sponsors a wide range of projects housed in a number of buildings in el-Bireh. The vocational training section includes serving, machine knitting, beauty culture, machine embroidery, and business and secretarial programs from which more than 1,500 young women have graduated.

People in need are employed in the production center. The profits from such goods as traditional Palestinian embroidery, knitted and crocheted items, canned foods, baked goods and beauty services are used to help those unable to help themselves.

The society also provides financial aid to a range of people: to students, to families without means of support, to those needing medical assistance and to prisoners. The society's sponsorship program, supported by people both inside and outside the country, supports 700 children whose parents either were killed in war or are serving long prison terms.

The society's folklore and cultural projects include a kindergarten, a daycare center, an adult education and literacy center, a library, and cultural and educational seminars. The Palestinian Folklore and Research Center publishes a journal and books on folklore, supervises a museum and holds folklore festivals.

The society's newest addition is a home for 85 girls, ranging in age from 4 to 22. Admission is on the basis of need. Future plans include small factories for clothing and frozen foods, which will further enable the society to be self-sufficient.

Um Khalil, the 12 board directors and the 79 society members all work on a voluntary basis. It is Um Khalil's dream to make each young woman a "white stone in the building."

"There is nothing impossible in the world. If one believes in something one can accomplish it," she says. Honesty, integrity and independence are the cardinal virtues necessary. Um Khalil is the embodiment of her own words.

Um Khalil has been prohibited by the Israelis from travelling abroad for many years, either to visit her family in Jordan or to attend the many conferences she has been invited to. Of her four sons and one daughter, she has not seen two of her sons in eight years and another in five years. She spent six years in prison and two years under town arrest. Nevertheless, she is an empowered woman, one who empowers and inspires many Palestinian women.

### A Mother's Plea

*Following is the text of Um Khalil's plea to be allowed to visit her children after three of them were involved in a car accident. Despite Red Cross intervention, she was not granted permission.*

I, the undersigned, Sameeha Khalil, a mother of five children, and the head of *In'ash el-Usra* Women's Society in el-Bireh on the occupied West Bank of the River Jordan, appeal to all mothers and all those concerned.

My three children were involved in a car accident, and I am prevented from going to visit them.

**"As a Christian of the Holy Land, I have witnessed how different Western churches interested in a so-called 'presence' in the Holy Land have divided us. These churches have made many Christians feel inferior and alienated from their own culture and language, loyal to a foreign leadership in Rome, Greece, England, Germany or the United States."**

For the past five years I have been prevented from leaving my country to visit my children, three of whom are not allowed to return home even for a visit. I am 64 years old and I have not seen two of my children for more than eight years.

This denial of the right of a mother to see her children contradicts the most basic internationally accepted human and legal rights.

I am appalled at the lack of humanity displayed by the Israeli military authorities under the present circumstances.

Much as their decision itself is an act of gratuitous cruelty, so has been the way in which it was relayed to me. For three weeks I have been kept in a state of hope and anxiety. Again and again I was told that I could expect a definite answer to my appeal within 36 to 48 hours. Each time I enquired on the date given to me, I was told that the decision was postponed for another two days.

On 24 March at 17.00 o'clock I received a telephone call from my lawyer. According to him, the military authorities had enquired whether, once abroad, I would attend a conference. I reaffirmed that my only intention was to visit my children. Again I was told that I could expect a decision within three to five days. Forty-five minutes later my lawyer informed me that the authorities had denied me permission to leave the West Bank.

I appeal to all mothers and those concerned with the protection of human rights all over the world to help me obtain the required permit to travel and visit my children.

—Sameeha S. Khalil, 25 March 1987■

by Jean Zaru

## **Testimony From A Christian Pacifist**

As a Palestinian, I am one of about 4 million people, half of whom have been uprooted and forcibly thrown out of their homes more than once. The other half has been subjugated, oppressed and made strangers in our own land. The denial of our right to self-determination is the root cause of other human rights violations against us. The expropriation of our land has been the key in denying us our right to self-determination. Many of my people have no basic guarantees for life or for the full development of their human potential. As individuals and as a nation we are seeking equality and freedom.

As an Arab woman in a male culture, I have no equality with my brothers. From the day a girl is born, she faces discrimination. This is even expressed in the congratulations a new mother receives. For the boy they say, "May he be blessed." For the girl: "May God recompense you and decorate your girl with many sons," or, "What shall we do? At least we thank God for your safe delivery."

Girls do not have equal treatment in health care, education or even nutrition. Boys are fed better than girls, and girls are supposed to serve and wait on their brothers. There are always double-standard judgments when it comes to boys and girls. Girls are condemned if they do not obey, conform or serve, or if they ask questions or choose a style of life different from what society expects. Women in my culture are victims of violence in many ways.

As a Christian, my brothers and sisters hold me responsible when the Bible is abused in a pagan way to worship false Gods like material wealth, race and other idols; and when individualistic interests are justified by quoting Biblical passages out of their historical context; and when the Bible is quoted to justify my people's oppression.

As a Christian of the Holy Land, I have witnessed how different Western churches interested in a so-called

He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation nor will they train for war anymore.  
—Isaiah 2:4

“Commitment is important too. Religion is relationship and relationship is action and life, but there is no life without love—only waste, strife, madness and destruction. We need to find the way of truth, of understanding, of justice and of peace—or else we destroy ourselves and others.”

“presence” in the Holy Land have divided us. These churches have made many Christians feel inferior and alienated from their own culture and language, loyal to a foreign leadership in Rome, Greece, England, Germany or the United States.

As an ordinary married woman with limited education and financial resources, I have to work outside the home for extra income. I have to literally break my back to also be the traditional homemaker so I will not lose credibility. I give lots of time to women’s organizations to convince people that it is possible for all women to be involved, not only the affluent who are bored at home—to convince people that they do count. I am always asked why a woman, layperson, mother and happily married person like me (recently widowed) is involved with religion and church. It is considered either the work of men or single, old or widowed women who have no lives of their own.

As a Quaker, I have to struggle on yet another front. I am labelled a pacifist, which is misinterpreted as my being passive or submissive or even accepting of the injustice that we all experience. People see that violence *seems* to bring about change and nonviolence *seems* to permit our homeland and our rights to be given to others.

I have thus been confronted with many structures of injustice operating throughout our community. I had many reasons for deciding to take part in the struggle against this injustice. First, the Gospel made me sensitive to the suffering which reflects the evils plaguing the human race and which opens us to God’s redeeming activity. Second, in Judaism, Christianity and Islam the concept of the divine nature existing in harmonious relationship with human nature and the natural order has been a dominant one. These religions’ teachings undergird the belief that human beings have rights. They teach us that since human beings are created in the image of God our value comes from this likeness; that God’s nature is loving, free and just; and that God’s purpose is to liberate human life from inhuman conditions—conditions which exist because humans of their free will have chosen behavior that disrupts the harmony intended to provide peace, justice and freedom for all.

One of the posters in our home reads, “True Godliness Doesn’t Tear People Out of their World but Enables Them to Live Better in it and Excites Their Endeavors to Mend it.” How true these words are to me! Many people want religion, but want it in its place—apart from their business, their politics, their luxuries and their conveniences.

Religion cannot be lived except with one’s whole life and what cannot be humanly lived is not religion.

Commitment is important too. Religion is relationship and relationship is action and life, but there is no life without love—only waste, strife, madness and destruction. We need to find the way of truth, of understanding, of justice and of peace—or else we destroy ourselves and others.

These principles are very active, highly political, often controversial and sometimes very dangerous forms of engagement in social conflict. But any involvement takes effort and there is always a price. Am I ready to pay the price, to share others’ suffering? I find suffering bearable if it is for the cause of liberation—to find a new community with each other and with God. I realize that those who operate the structures of injustice and oppression are dependent on the people they oppress and are equally in need of liberation and God’s grace. Yet it seems to me that the will and strength to end the oppression comes from those who bear it in their own lives rather than from the privileged persons and nations.



But where do we begin? If the children of God, wherever they are, are created in God’s image then they *are* our brothers and sisters. What do we do to preserve the dignity of their lives? We have to empower each other. All of us count and all of us can make a difference. We should affirm each other, affirm what is good and beautiful in our culture, values, food, embroidery and family relations. We should affirm instead of disparage, although there is so much that we should reject. This will give us more self-esteem and make it easier to see the good in others, including those with whom we are in conflict.

- **Women in Church Ministry**
- **Laura Loewen** of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan will begin as pastor of the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal in July. She is a 1988 graduate of AMBS.
- **Bev Suderman**, assistant to the pastor at Vineland (Ont.) United Mennonite Church since 1986, has resigned to study at AMBS this fall.
- **Nancy Brubaker Bauman and Brian Bauman** will become co-pastors of First Mennonite Church in Reedley, Calif. in August.
- **Doris and Rod Weber** are co-pastoring a new Mennonite congregation of about 45 people which began in Brantford, Ont., earlier this year.
- **Noah and Sara Kolb** became pastors of Bellwood Mennonite Church in Milford, Neb. in March.
- **Randy and Nancy Heacock** became pastors of Northern Virginia Mennonite Church in Vienna, Va. in March.
- By the year 2000, one pastor out of four in the pulpits of mainline Protestant churches may be a woman, according to *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. Currently one-third of all U.S. seminary students are women. In some seminaries, such as Harvard Divinity School, more than half the students are female. But not all will be readily accepted by local churches. Even in the United Church of Christ, a liberal denomination with the greatest percentage of women clergy among mainline churches, 61 percent of the female graduates say they have been turned down for pulpits because of gender.

Many of us know that to violate is not only to use force. It is also when we treat others, sacred children of God, as nothing. When we hate, or think evil thoughts, or offend others, or even harbor uncharitable thoughts, we are being violent. It is not easy for us to learn to consider the sacredness of life, of human dignity and worth and of justice and peace when our own dignity and worth is rarely recognized. But maybe through the pain, the hurt and the wounds we will try to realize our power and to become agents of change for the better. It might be a dream to speak about peace and justice in our region, but it is my human right to dream and to work toward the reality of this dream.

May we all be strengthened to work for this kind of peace by creating justice and equality.■

**Jean Zaru** was a teacher of religion and ethics at the Friend's school in Ramallah, West Bank. She and her late husband, Fuad, are originally from Ramallah and are members of the Quaker meeting there.

is the designated headquarters for women's groups in the whole diocese (Hoima Catholic Diocese). There are a number of issues I find myself dealing with:

—These women are really interested in learning sewing and knitting and how to bake bread. Material and yarn are completely out of their price range, and wheat flour costs \$1.50/pound and is rising. I would be interested in information on successful income-generating projects using local materials, and in how these ideas were presented.

—Family planning. The women here have very little control over their own fertility. (Maybe that is OK with them... I'm still learning.) The Catholic church advocates natural family planning. I have a hard time appreciating this because from my experience in a family planning clinic in the States it doesn't work. Then again, there do not seem to be a lot of other options available.

—I am having a really hard time appreciating the church's view of women. I know I'm not going to change centuries of tradition!

Any information you can send my way on these issues will be appreciated! There is no rush on this. (There is no rush on anything here in Hoima; as we adjust to it, we kind of like it!).

Thanks for your help, and keep up the good work! We think *Women's Concerns Report* is a great publication!  
—Carol Martin Johnson, Kampala, Uganda

*Ed. Note: Readers who have experiences, insights and resources to share with Carol, please send them to her at MCC, Box 6051, Kampala, Uganda, East Africa.*

- We have just received our first issue of *Women's Concerns Report* (No. 73 Widowhood). Thank you and please keep them coming. Since being in Uganda I have had access to and opportunity to read a number of back issues. I find them refreshing, affirming and reassuring.

I especially appreciated the Jan.-Feb. 1987 issue on "Sharing Our Stories" (No. 70). The stories were not professionally written—that, I think, held some of their appeal for me. These were experiences of real people, written by real people. It is important, healthy and growth-producing for women to share their stories. We need not feel threatened or intimidated by the fact that we may not be professionals in the medium in which we choose to communicate.

My work here in Hoima is somewhat vague at this point. I'm still trying to figure out just *what* I am doing! I have been associating with the Hoima women's association. It

- I wanted to express my appreciation for the work of the *Women's Concerns Report*. I especially found the recent issue on domestic violence (No. 74) helpful. I was teaching I Peter at the seminary this fall and one of the issues with which I wanted my students to struggle was the unfortunate fact that Scripture is sometimes used to "legitimate" such violence. Mary Kauffmann-Kennel's article helped make my point.

The *Report* is definitely serving a unique and important purpose in the lives of Mennonite women.  
—Mary Schertz, Elkhart, Ind.

- Thank you so much for *Women's Concerns Report*. I am inspired and encouraged by every issue, but have been especially touched by the issues which addressed wife abuse

## Letters



• **Peace and Justice**

- **Linda and Titus Peachey** have been appointed co-executive secretaries of the MCC U.S. Peace Section, replacing John Stoner. Formerly co-country representatives for MCC Laos, the Peacheys have spent the last 18 months directing a Peaceworks Alternatives program in Lancaster County, Pa.

- **Najda: Women Concerned About the Middle East** publishes a bi-monthly newsletter. It features articles on the current situation in the Occupied Territories as well as on activities to bring the Palestinian situation to the American public. A year's subscription to the *Najda Newsletter* costs \$5 and is available from Najda, P.O. Box 7152, Berkeley, Calif. 94707.

- **Dorothy Yoder Nyce**, Goshen, Ind., has been awarded the C. Henry Peace Lectureship for 1988-1989. The lecture, prepared annually by a Goshen or Bluffton College faculty member, is presented at both colleges and others, as requested. Dorothy's study will focus on peace and justice issues for women in India, drawing on her own personal experience in India, as well as the writings and research of Indian women.

- **Carrie Harder** is the volunteer coordinator of a new Peace and Justice Center opened by Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario. Harder is a nurse and former hospital public relations manager. The center is the first of its kind in the area and its opening received news publicity throughout Canada.

(No. 74) and images of God (No. 76). The two are integrally related to one another. We have used the male images of God so exclusively we have indeed forgotten they are metaphor.

Some have gone so far as to not only believe God is a man, but that therefore males are above females and have some inherent right to rule over them. It is a small step from there to abuses of many kinds. Even in our Mennonite/Brethren in Christ backgrounds, women have been ignored, discounted and abused in families and in the church—all in the guise of submission.

Keep up the good work encouraging, prodding and challenging us toward being the people of God.  
—*Mary Steffy, East Petersburg, Pa.*

*We encourage and invite letters from readers that speak to the issues raised and the perspectives presented in Report. Although we try to print all letters, some may be shortened or edited to fit available space. All letters must be signed, although writers may request to have their names withheld.*

## News and Verbs

- **Elizabeth Horsch Bender**, translator, editor and teacher, died on March 24 in Goshen, Ind. at age 93. She taught German, mathematics and other subjects at Goshen, Hesston and Eastern Mennonite colleges. She also served many years as a translator and editor for several Mennonite publications, including *Mennonite Encyclopedia* and *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.
- **Mary Klassen** has been named educational resources director for Mennonite Mutual Aid. She has been an MMA staff member since 1979, most recently as a trainer/communicator for the field staff.
- **Pat Swartzendruber** has been appointed vice president for the Administration and Resources Division of Mennonite Board of Missions in Elkhart, Ind. Her appointment, effective Jan. 1, 1989, is historic—she becomes the first woman appointed as a vice president in MBM history. She has been director of church relations since August 1986.

- The Philippine government has issued a ruling which effectively bans persons from going abroad to work as domestics—to remain effective until the government is satisfied that safeguards have been established to prevent abuses in domestic-employer relationships. An estimated 3 million Filipinos currently work overseas, sending significant amounts of earnings back home. The overseas workers have been termed the country's "biggest growth industry."
- **Genevieve Camus-Jacques** has been named the new general secretary of Cimade, the French ecumenical aid organization. She previously served as executive secretary of the program for refugees, migrants and human rights of the World YWCA in Geneva.
- Church Women United has undertaken a five-year imperative against the poverty of women and children, which has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. Thirty six million U.S. citizens live in poverty—20 million are women. One in every four children is poor—one half of all black children, one third of all Hispanic children, and one sixth of all white children. Church Women United hopes to concentrate all its human and financial energy and resources to help eliminate the pauperization and marginalization of women and children in this country.
- "Story Telling and Bridge Building," a national Church of the Brethren woman's event, will take place August 4-7 at the University of La Verne. For information write to Leona D. Ikenberry, 1727 Maplewood, La Verne, Calif. 91750.
- MCC has published a new monograph, *Technology, Women and Change*, written by Catherine R. Mumaw, a home economics professor at the University of Oregon. The 45-page booklet, written for rural community development workers, discusses how appropriate technology can improve the lives of rural women in less industrialized countries. It includes an extensive resource list on women and technology. Individual copies, \$1, are available from MCC, Box M, Akron, Pa. 17501.
- The black mayor of Newport News, Va. was the keynote speaker for Black History Month at Eastern Mennonite College. Jessie Menifield Rattley was the first woman and the first black elected to the Newport News City Council in 1970. She was selected as mayor in 1986.
- **Phyllis Martens**, in Nairobi, Kenya for six months, is teaching a women's course at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology and instructing part time at Daystar University College, a branch campus of Messiah College, Grantham, Pa. Martens hails from Fresno, Calif.

- Imagine the millions of women and thousands of women's and peace organizations already committed to peace and equality for women united behind a women's peace agenda. *Women's Peace Initiative* seeks to unite women around a peace agenda to such a large degree that it shifts the course of U.S. policy. For more information on the WPI network, write to 2 Lamson Place, Cambridge, MA 02139.



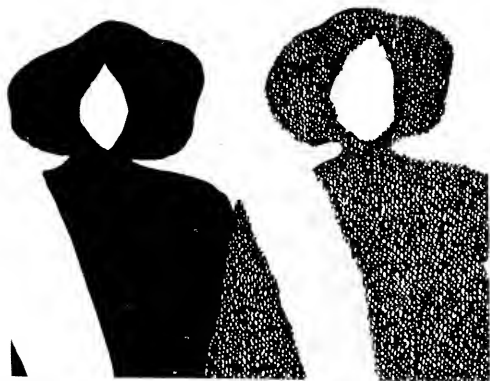
- "Women of Strength: Ancient and Modern" is a slide set and video created to foster greater understanding of the struggles and accomplishments of global women. It was created by seven women with MCC and mission experience, including: Deb Byler (Guatemala), Frieda Shellenberg Erb (Bolivia, Argentina), Peggy Froehlich (Zaire), Dawn Yoder Harms (Zaire), Mary Yoder Holsopple (Uganda), Dorothy Yoder Nyce (India), and Cindy Yoder Shafik (Egypt).

Using Proverbs 31:10-31 as a framework, the 24-minute audiovisual invites viewers to reflect on economics and roles, beauty and burdens, stereotypes and discrepancy. Rachel S. Fisher reads the narration. Twenty people took the pictures in 17 countries. To borrow, indicate first and second date preferences. Video copies may be purchased.

In Canada, order slide set or video from: Mennonite Resource Center, 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1. (519) 745-8458. The video is also available from General Conference AV Resource Center, 600 Shaftesbury, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4; (204) 888-6781.

In the United States, the video is available from Sisters & Brothers, 125 East Lincoln Ave., Goshen, IN 46526. (219) 533-4167 and from Franconia/Eastern District Conference, Attn: Marianne Zuercher, Box 116, Souderton Shopping Center, Souderton, PA 18964. (215) 723-5513. To order slide set, contact Dorothy Yoder Nyce, 1603 S. 15th St., Goshen, IN 46526. Costs range from postage to \$10 rental.

- In Chicago, a new play by John Dally, "House of Bread," reflects this priest and playwright's understanding of contemporary women and how their experiences parallel those of Mary, the mother of God. Written to celebrate the Marian year, the play is an ecumenical venture of the Episcopal Diocese and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago.
- In Switzerland, a newly formed organization called Women for the Church and the Pope, says it **disagrees with a petition** from the League of Swiss Catholic Women calling for improvements in the situation of women in the church.
- According to the *National Catholic Reporter* the **first draft of the U.S. bishops' pastoral on women** makes a strong appeal for women's full participation in all non-ordained church ministries. The 164-page *Partners in the Mystery of Redemption* offers an examination and reflection on women and their role in family life, church and society. Commentators feel that it sends another strong signal to the Vatican that U.S. Catholic women desire fuller participation in church ministries.
- Goshen College has openings for a **full-time graphic artist** beginning Dec. 1, 1988, for **two full-time instructors in its nursing program** and also for an **admissions counselor**. To express interest in the graphics position, contact John D. Yoder, Director of Information Services, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind. 46526. Write to Willard Martin, Dean, for information on the nursing openings and to Richard Gerig, Director of Admissions, regarding the counseling position.
- The American Family Association says the decision by the American Telephone & Telegraph Co. to **stop billing for "dial-a-porn" companies** is a positive step that could deal a serious blow to the billion-dollar-a-year business. Donald E. Wildmon, AFA executive director, hopes regional phone companies will join AT&T in refusing to provide billing services for porn companies.
- *Feminist Studies* is a **journal founded to encourage analytic responses to feminist issues** and to open new areas of research, criticism, and speculation. Three yearly issues are available for \$21 from Feminist Studies, c/o Women's Studies Program, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. Foreign orders should add \$4 for surface, \$14 for airmail.
- Chicago, July 21-24. That's the place and date of the eighth international conference of the Evangelical Women's Caucus. For more information contact EWC International, P.O. Box 209, Hadley, N.Y. 12835; (518) 696-2406.
- The ninth Hispanic Mennonite Women's Conference took place April 14-17 in San Antonio, Texas. **Leonor de Mendez**, a pastor in the Guatemalan Mennonite church, served as the keynote speaker. **Martha Hernandez** of Goshen, Ind. coordinated the conference, which brought together over 100 women from around the United States.
- Leola Epp needs **information and writers on homelessness and housing** issues in the United States for an upcoming issue of *Report*. In addition to personal stories from women directly affected by homelessness or inadequate housing, she would like overviews, statistics, etc. from professionals involved in this area. If you would like to contribute to this issue of *Report*, to be printed in 1989, contact Leola Epp, R.R. 4, Box 138, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J7. (306) 931-2508.
- **Jan Lugibihl** recently returned from the Philippines, where she worked in MCC's ministry to the "hospitality women" of Olongapo and as interim country representative. She is currently spending several months at Synapses in Chicago, speaking to churches and other groups about her Philippine experiences.



- **Shirley Stauffer Redekop** of Lancaster, Pa., is serving as interim *Report* editor until a new women's concerns coordinator for the MCC Akron office is hired. Shirley and her husband, Fred, served with MCC Thailand from 1982-1985. They attend Bethel Mennonite Church, where Fred is the pastor, and have two pre-school children. Former editor *Emily Will*, her husband, Mark, and two sons are working with MCC Mexico in community development.
- Photos on front page, page 9 and of embroidery taken by *Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker*. Photos on pages 5 and 8 taken by *Judith Dick*.

- **Agnes Hubert** has been named director of MCC Canada's new Service Education Program. The program links MCC Canada with three Mennonite Bible colleges in an effort to motivate and train young people for service. Hubert is currently acting director of China Educational Exchange.
- **Charity Denlinger**, a senior English major at Goshen (Ind.) College, has written a book of poems called *A Time to Speak*. It is published by the college's Pinchpenny Press.
- **Brenda Bear Epp** of Toronto won a \$7,500 commission to create a work of contemporary personal adornment for the Royal Ontario Museum. The commission was from the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture to mark the museum's 75th anniversary. Epp, 25, is a member of the Mennonite Arts and Crafts Group.
- **Jan Porzelius Schumacher**, Pandora, Ohio, has been appointed Foundation Series resource person for the Central District of the General Conference. She replaces **Jo Ropp** of Normal, Ill.
- **LaVonne Godwin Platt** recently authored the book *Bela Banerjee, Bringing Health to India's Villages*. This biography of a village health nurse gives a picture of family life and the role of women, and shows how Banerjee's work led to a greater acceptance of women in the village. The book may be ordered from Wordsworth, Route 2, Box 209, Newton, Kan. 67114. The price is \$11.95, plus \$1.25 for mailing in the United States and \$1.75 for postage outside the United States.
- **Sara Lin** of Houston, Texas is a new General Conference representative for the *With* magazine consulting staff. Her tasks include evaluating published issues of this inter-Mennonite periodical for teen-agers and supplying ideas for stories and topics.
- "Empowering Young Women for Shalom," a day-long seminar, was sponsored by the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference in April. In an effort to balance out church attention given to young men in the area of conscription, the conference focused on high school-aged women and how they can develop a personal understanding of shalom. Mary Kauffmann-Kennel, Pam Tolmay, Delores Graber and Lloyd Miller served on the planning committee.
- **Helen Glick** and her husband, **Bruce**, of Kidron, Ohio, who formerly served with MCC in Bolivia, have assumed duties as co-directors of MCC Great Lakes. Other MCC Great Lakes staff persons are **Marilyn Voran**, food/hunger/justice concerns, and **Cathy Godshall**, refugee concerns.

*REPORT* is published bimonthly by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. The committee, formed in 1973, believes that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. By sharing information and ideas, the committee strives to promote new relationships and corresponding supporting structures in which men and women can grow toward wholeness and mutuality. Articles and views presented in *REPORT* do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Committee on Women's Concerns.

U.S. residents may send subscriptions to the above address. Canadian residents may send subscriptions to MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9. A donation of \$10.00 per year per subscription is suggested.

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